



WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE A. F. OF L., BY INSTRUCTION OF ST. LOUIS CONVENTION, DIRECTED THE OFFICERS AT HEADQUARTERS TO FURNISH A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER, FREE OF COST, TO ALL OFFICIAL LABOR PUBLICATIONS.

Containing a brief summary of important matters, affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will further the development and progress of the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

HEADQUARTERS

501-509 G ST. N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.

FRANK MORRISON, SECRETARY

SAMUEL GOMPERS, PRESIDENT

No. 49.

LAWRENCE STRIKE INVESTIGATION

Washington, March 9--The house committee on rules has before it for consideration two resolutions on the Lawrence, Mass., strike, one of which calls for a special committee of investigation, while the other authorizes the committee on labor to make the investigation. A number of men and women, boys and girls, participants in the strike, have testified before the rules committee, giving their story as to the conduct of the police and state militia during the strike. Some of the instances related are almost unbelievable, and yet apparently the strikers have been treated shamefully. President Gompers, Congressman Wilson and Berger appeared before the committee in advocacy of the resolutions of investigation, the two former arguing in favor of an investigation by the labor committee. The Lawrence situation from all reports appears to be in statu quo, although police officials have ceased their hostility toward the strikers. Some of the mills have announced an increase in the rate of wages, but from reports at hand the increase offered has not been sufficient to induce many of the strikers to return to work. It is quite likely that the investigation will be ordered by the rules committee and the actual state of affairs brought to light. The bureau of labor also has its agents in Lawrence at the present time.

ENGLISH LINERS' STRIKE

Washington, March 9--From sources deemed authentic it is reported that over 1,000,000 coal miners in England are idle. As a consequence approximately 750,000 additional workmen are also in idleness. Steamship and railroad companies are already seriously affected, many of their regular runs being abandoned with the end in view to keep up a semblance of communication as long as possible. In addition many factories are being closed and it is predicted that by March 12, in the event no settlement is reached, a paralysis of all business will obtain. Strenuous efforts are being made by high officials of the English government to find some basis of settlement, but at this time the outlook is not promising. It is reported, however, that a minimum wage law will be introduced in parliament and if its provisions are acceptable to those involved it is said that steps will be taken not only to urge its speedy adoption, but the miners themselves will endeavor to at once take the necessary preliminary steps to inaugurate the minimum wage, if it is adopted or acceded to. Coal and food prices are steadily advancing.

STEWART GETS HAMMERED

Washington, March 9--At the annual meeting of the National Civic Federation Second Assistant Postmaster General Stewart defended the executive orders of Ex-President Roosevelt and President Taft in denying the right of the postoffice employees petitioning congress for a redress of grievances. Mr. Stewart presented the same arguments which he gave at the hearings before the civil service reform committee of the house. Upon the conclusion of his defense of the executive orders and the department he was followed by Congressman Lloyd, the author of the anti-"gag" bill, and President Gompers. The department and Mr. Stewart were handled without gloves. Mr. Lloyd claimed he had in his possession a large number of letters which showed conclusively that the employees were intimidated, and begged that their names be kept a secret, fearing that if they were divulged summary dismissal would follow. Mr. Stewart opposed any affiliation with or organization of department employees by "outside" labor organizations. Congressman Lloyd was extremely vigorous in his criticism of the department and Mr. Stewart. President Gompers also went after the department and did not mince matters. "Government employees, if they obeyed this order, would be tongue-tied and hand-cuffed," said Mr. Gompers. A large number of representative labor men were present at the meeting, quite a number of whom were on the program to address the convention during its twelfth annual session.

POSTOFFICE BILL REPORTED

Washington, March 9--The postoffice appropriation bill, carrying a large sum, and also abolishing the "gag" rule of postal service employees, formerly established by Ex-President Roosevelt in an executive order and latterly strengthened and made more arbitrary by President Taft, has been reported to the house of representatives. The bill also provides for a general and experimental parcels post system on city and rural routes, re-establishing an eight-hour day for letter-carriers in the city delivery service and clerks in first and second class offices, and prohibiting the use of any but steel cars in the railway mail service. The provision dealing with the "gag" rule will permit postal service employees to form labor organizations and affiliate with the American Federation of Labor, and will also give these employees the privilege, either individually or collectively, of petitioning congress for a redress of grievances. It is expected that the committee on civil service reform will shortly report the Lloyd bill, which is also an anti-"gag" bill.

BITTER STRIKE ENDED

Washington, March 9--Reports from Denver, Colo., are to the effect that the strike in the northern lignite coal fields has been brought to a close. This strike has been in progress over two years and one of the disagreeable incidents was the incarceration in the Denver county jail of sixteen union coal miners who, it was claimed violated the terms of an injunction. The settlement, it is stated, was reached by a very slight compromise on the part of the coal miners, and that the miners really gained substantially what they were contending for.

FREIGHT HANDLERS' LOCKOUT

Winnipeg, March 9--The Canadian Pacific Railway is making an effort to destroy the Freight Handlers' Union of this city. Recently four men were summarily discharged, the president and secretary included. These men were told that "personal services" were satisfactory, but at the same time the men were "unsatisfactory" to the company. A day or two after the officials of the union were discharged twenty-eight more men were summarily dismissed. A member of the executive board of the international union is here and an attempt is being made to make an amicable adjustment, but it would appear that the officials of the company are looking for trouble.

WORKINGMEN LOSE HOMES

Houston, Texas, March 9--In the great fire which destroyed a tremendous amount of property in this city, workmen were heavy losers. It is estimated that at least five hundred homes of workmen were destroyed. A large portion either carried a small amount of insurance or none at all.

TURNED TO GOOD ADVANTAGE

London, March 9--The recent cotton trade lockout, having been directly caused by non-unionists refusing to make common cause with the unionists, has resulted to the advantage of the unions in the weaving trade. Since the locked-out employes returned to work under the truce a campaign has been vigorously carried on, with the end in view of getting all non-unionists to become members of the weavers' Association. This campaign has been to a great degree successful, in fact, greater progress has been made than was to be expected. Great impetus has been given to the organizations not only in the weaving trade, but in others as well.

CHICAGO CAR STRIKE AVOIDED

Chicago, March 9--The recent suspension of a number of men by the new superintendent of the Chicago Railways Company nearly precipitated a strike. The entire matter, however, was taken to the higher officials of the railroad and a satisfactory adjustment has been reached. The new superintendent, apparently of an extremely arbitrary disposition, was overruled by the higher officials of the company. It is indeed unfortunate that men of this character are placed in official positions, but the street carmen of Chicago are also fortunate in having been able to carry their case to officials of the company who recognized that injustice had been done to the men in most instances.

NO COAL RESERVE

Washington, March 9--It is reported by the United Mine Workers' officials in the Pennsylvania anthracite region that the total stock of coal on hand is only about one and a half million tons. It is asserted that with the average demand this would be consumed in seven days. This state of affairs argues in the interest of the miners should a strike be necessary in these fields.

LABORERS' APPEALS ANSWERED

Toronto, March 9--The Trades and Labor Council recently waited on Sir James Whitney and his cabinet and urged legislation with reference to the hours of labor in certain occupations. As a result Sir James introduced a bill to amend the Ontario railway and municipal act. The amendment will give the railway board the authority to regulate the working hours, exclusive of any agreement at present existent between the municipality and the railway company. The motormen and conductors on street cars now in order to put in a ten hour day are compelled to be on duty fifteen and sixteen hours. Sir James also introduced a bill to amend the mines act, requiring that miners shall not be employed underground for more than eight hours in any twenty-four, including in such eight hours the time occupied in descending into and ascending from the mines. The penalty attached is a fine of \$50 for each offense.

REQUESTS DENIED

Washington, March 9--Director Durand of the Census Bureau has refused to grant the request of 150 clerks for compensation for the 2½ days leave per month which they contend they are entitled to. The director states that the employees have no legal right to the leave, as the law reads "may be granted" instead of "shall be granted". It is possible the matter may be called to the attention of Congress and the leave provided for, there being such a deficiency in the appropriation at this time that it is claimed there is insufficient funds to pay the amount asked.

TO MULCT EXPRESS COMPANIES

Washington, March 9--Fines aggregating \$200,000,000 are the possible outcome of the prosecutions against the express companies for overcharging. The interstate commerce commission is deeply interested in the eleven indictments brought against the Adams' Express Company in Cincinnati, and agents of the commission are being dispatched to all parts of the country, carrying evidence on which additional indictments are to be brought. Commissioner Lane states that there are on file with the commission 10,000 complaints against express charges.

SELF-DENIAL WEEK

Washington, March 9--It is reported that the members of the Women's Trade Union League of Chicago have instituted a campaign to raise funds to assist other working girls and women to organize unions and enforce union conditions. The week of February 26-March 2 was designated as "Self-Denial Week", the girls pledging themselves to remain away from theatres, walk to work and donate the savings thus made into the fund to be used to prosecute organization work.

BRICKLAYERS' WAGE IN ENGLAND AND GERMANY

Washington, March 9--The average wage received by bricklayers in England is \$9.72 per week for 52½ hours. The bricklayers in Germany receive \$7.50 per week and are required to work 59 hours.

ANTHRACITE COAL MINERS

Washington, March 9--The anthracite coal miners' demands for increased pay and other changes have been rejected by the operators. This action was not anticipated, although no positive assurance had been held out to the miners that an acceptance by the operators would result from their conference. In other words, it was thought that a compromise would be suggested. However, it is not yet thought that negotiations will be discontinued. A committee of the operators has been empowered to formulate a reply to the miners to be presented to them on March 13. In the meantime efforts will be put forth by both sides to reach a basis upon which an amicable adjustment can be reached. As a result of the present situation anthracite coal has advanced from 50¢ to \$1.00 per ton. In the soft coal territory practically the same condition of affairs prevails, the miners asking for an increase and the operators refusing. It is not probable that a settlement will be arrived at by the miners and operators in either the hard or soft coal fields before the end of this month, with a strong probability of cessation of work. As a result of the English strike American coal at all Atlantic seaboard points has risen in price.

ESCH BILL ACTED ON FAVORABLY

Washington, March 9--The Esch bill, which provides for a tax upon white phosphorus matches and for other purposes, has been acted upon favorably by the house ways and means committee, but not as yet reported to the house. This bill imposes a special tax on manufacturers of white phosphorus matches of \$1,000 per annum. In addition to this there is a tax to be levied of one cent per one hundred matches on all matches made of white phosphorus, the tax to be paid by the manufacturer and represented by adhesive stamps upon each package. The bill also provides that after a certain date white phosphorus matches manufactured wholly, or in part, in any foreign country shall not be entitled to entry at any port of the United States, the importation of these matches being absolutely prohibited. As is well known, employees in match factories where white phosphorus is used, contract the incurable disease known as "phossy-jaw", and the bill aims to discourage the manufacture of matches with this substance.

FEDERATION STATISTICS

Washington, March 9--The membership of the unions affiliated to the American Federation of Labor in January, 1911, as per per capita tax paid, was 1,691,574. Incomplete reports for January, 1912, give a membership of 1,827,584, making an increased membership in January, 1912, over January 1911, of 136,014. The number of volunteer organizers commissioned by the American Federation of Labor in 1910 was 1,462, and for 1911, 1,594. There are now 1,647 volunteer organizers commissioned by the American Federation of Labor.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS' CASE

Washington, March 9--The electrical workers' controversy involving a secession movement, and which has tied up nearly \$100,000, is now being tried in the courts of Cleveland. It is expected that a decision will be had in the case in the very near future.

WAGE DEADLOCK

London, March 9--Serious friction exists between the Shipping Federation and the Joint Committee of Engineering Societies. The men demand that their application for an increase of from \$7.50 to \$15.00 per month, with a minimum of \$40.00 per month for sea-going engineers, shall be dealt with on a national basis. The shipping federation has refused to proceed with the question as desired, contending that the shipowners' associations at various ports should deal with the subject. The societies involved are the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the Steam Engine Makers' Society and the Marine Engineers' Association. This latter association, after considering the attitude of the ship owners, has replied that it is not prepared to go to the various associations with its demands in view of the fact that the National Federation quite recently dealt with the wages of seamen and firemen on a national basis. The outlook is not very encouraging.

COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

London, March 9--The board of trade report, dealing with co-operative societies, shows that the membership of these organizations reached in 1909 a total of 2,597,236, an increase of 55% over the returns of a decade ago. Trading operations amounted to nearly \$650,000,000, as against \$280,000,000 in 1899.

TO MAKE DEMONSTRATION

London, March 9--The London Trades Council is organizing a great demonstration, with a view of a revival in London and the country of a agitation for a local eight-hour day, or forty-eight hour week. The first Sunday in May will probably be selected for the first demonstration, a series of demonstrations being under consideration.

PLANS OPERATION BY GOVERNMENT

Washington, March 9--A bill has been introduced in the United States senate by Senator Gardner of Maine authorizing the government to take over the properties of the express companies and operate them in conjunction with the postoffice department. The estimated cost of acquiring the express companies is a trifle over \$39,000,000. The statement has been made that the parcels' post would not bring the relief desired, as the express companies are paying the railways only about one-half as much for carrying packages as the government would have to pay them for carrying its packages under the present postal law, and in order to get the benefit of this relatively low railway rate the express contracts with the railways should be taken advantage of. It was also brought out that the average express rate in ten foreign countries amounts to \$4.25 a ton, while in the United States the average is \$31.20 a ton.

CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP

Washington, March 9--The Labor Leader of Lancaster, Pa., announces that the paper has changed hands. Harry Linerling, member of Typographical Union #70, has purchased the entire plant. E. E. Greenwalt who has been connected with the paper as associate editor since its establishment in 1892, now assumes editorial charge.

WAGE CONFERENCE

Washington, March 9--March 14 is the date agreed upon for the conference between the representatives of the locomotive engineers and the railroads. The meeting place to be New York, to discuss the demand of the engineers for increased wages. This is a movement that involves over 25,000 engineers, and the railroads maintain that existing conditions will not justify an increase. As a counter-argument the engineers assert that the cost of living has increased to such an extent that an increase is imperative.

SMALL WAGES IN CORK INDUSTRY

Washington, March 9--The cork industry in Toulon, France, pays a wage that is infinitesimally small. At the present time the factories are running to their full capacity, but the establishments use scarcely any automatic machinery. Girls engaged in counting and sorting earn as little as 15 cents per day, while those working the hand-operated knives receive 30 to 40 cents per day. The wages of most of the higher paid employees do not exceed 75 to 80 cents per day.

WARSHIPS NEARING COMPLETION

Washington, March 9--Four battleships, fourteen torpedo boat destroyers, twenty submarine torpedo boats, two seagoing tugs and five colliers under construction for the United States Navy made good progress toward completion during the month of January. On February 1st the battleship Wyoming was 90-8/10 complete, the Arkansas 88%, New York 23 9/10% and the Texas 51-5/10%.

AS THE PRESS VIEWS IT

Washington, March 9--The following paragraph is taken from the St. Louis Republic: "Now they say that Sam Gompers made a speech standing on the American flag. This looks like a Los Angeles Times' story. Most Americans who are acquainted with both institutions would rather trust the old flag to the American Federation of Labor than to the Otis crowd in Los Angeles."

NATIONAL WOMAN SUFFRAGE

Washington, March 9-- Senator Works of California has proposed an amendment to the constitution providing suffrage for women throughout the United States, and the bill has been referred to the Senate judiciary committee. Senator Works also has pending another constitutional amendment providing for a six year term for the president of the United States and forbidding re-election.

NOW IT'S GIRL SCOUTS

Washington, March 9--A movement is on foot in this city, designed to organize a troop of girl scouts. As is already known, there is throughout the country a large organization of boy scouts. This latest move appears to be a sort of companion piece.

LABOR CONDITIONS IN BRITISH MINES

London, March 9--A report of the chief inspector of mines shows that 1,078,083 persons were employed in the mines of the United Kingdom and the Isle of Man, an increase over the preceding year of 25,648. In the mines 865,485 persons were engaged in work underground and 212,598 above ground, of which latter number 6,404 were females. There were 1,280 fatal accidents, involving the loss of 1,818 lives. The death rate for accidents per 1,000 persons at all mines was underground, 1,917 for 1910 as compared with 1,621 for 1909. There has been an almost continuous gain in the safety of persons employed in mines and quarries for the last sixty years, the interval from 1906 to 1910 being the only five year period in which there has not been a decrease in the loss of life of persons working in the British mines and quarries. The death rate for the five years closing with 1910 was 1,416 as against 4,301 for the five years ending with 1855. The death rate for each one million tons of minerals raised from the mines under the Coal Mines Regulation Act in 1910 was 6.37 as against 10. in 1851. The death rate per one million tons of coal for 1910 was 6.54.

AN ALLEGED IMPOSTER

Indianapolis, Ind., March 9--Edwin Perry, Secretary-Treasurer of the United Mine Workers of America, announces in the columns of the United Mine Workers' Journal that a man named Ernest Meier "has been preying upon the members of the different craft organizations all over the country, and obtaining large sums of money here and there, under the false pretense that the sum would be refunded by Local Union No. 1397 United Mine Workers, of West Bay City, Mich." Mr. Perry states that the credentials carried are forgeries and requests that should the above named gentleman appear seeking funds that the office of the United Mine Workers be immediately communicated with in order that such steps may be taken as will protect the unions throughout the country from being further imposed upon.

AGITATING WRAPPED BREAD

Washington, March 9--A crusade is being inaugurated in this city to have bread wrapped at the bakeries before distribution. It is asserted that unwrapped bread is a potential danger to health where it is not wrapped at the bakeries. This important food product is handled many times from the ovens to the ultimate consumer - from oven to tray tray to wagon, wagon to the retailer, retailer to the bread case, from the bread case to the customer or wagon to be delivered from wagon to customer, etc. It is stated by the health authorities that bread is a convenient germ carrier and no doubt many diseases are contracted by the careless handling of bread.

OPEN AIR SCHOOLS

Washington, March 9--A move is being made in this city to segregate tubercular school children in the public schools and inaugurate an open air school system. It is proposed not only to segregate the affected children, but to provide nourishing food in order that the disease may be not only held in check, but with a view to complete eradication.

BUILDERS MAKE THREATS

London, March 9--The National Federation of Builders, the employers' association, is making an effort to combine all local associations of builders, with the end in view of ordering a general lockout in the event of unionists causing a stoppage of work by refusing to work with non-unionists. The union men in the building trades, however, announce that they will continue their efforts to not only maintain the union shop, but to increase its scope.

COTTON TRADE DISPUTE

London, March 9--The recent cotton factory lockout caused an expenditure by the unions of \$200,000, this sum being aside from the money spent by district associations. The reserve funds of some of these district associations have been depleted and there is under discussion at this time the advisability of levying assessments to carry the reserve fund back to the point where it was before the lockout.

ENGLAND'S POSTAL SERVICE

London, March 9--The national joint committee of postal and telegraph associations has abandoned the idea of reorganizing the postal service. The reorganization scheme presented so many difficulties that it was decided not to attempt it at this time. It was decided, however, to permit the United Kingdom Postal Clerks' Association to present evidence in support of the restoration of civil rights, recognition of servants' associations, superannuation, access to official papers, casual and local labor, sanitary inspection of postoffices, limitation of overtime and method of future inquiries.

LABOR'S PROGRAM

London, March 9--The parliamentary labor party has mapped out its plans for the present session. Mr. J. Ramsey MacDonald has been elected chairman, J. Parker, vice-chairman; C. Duncan, secretary; B. H. Roberts the British trade union congress fraternal delegate to the American Federation of Labor convention at Atlanta. Chief whip and J. Pointer, junior whip. A decision has been reached to take up the following bills in the order mentioned. First, trade union amendment bill; second, right to work; third, education (administrative provisions); fourth, eight-hour day; fifth railway nationalization; sixth compulsory weighing in certain trades; seventh, eviction of workmen during trade disputes; eighth, blind aid bill; ninth, local authorities (enabling) bill.

POTTERS THREATEN STRIKE

London, March 9--A strike is threatened in the pottery trade and if inaugurated will affect nearly 4,000 operatives. Increases in wages are demanded and at a meeting recently of the National Union of Pottery Operatives it was decided to give the employers six weeks notice. Placers in the ovens demand an increase of 9d per day and apprentices wages to be increased in same proportion. The male and female workers have also demanded a ten per cent advance and the printers and transferrers have given notice for a similar increase.

PORTO RICO CITIZENSHIP BILL PASSED

Washington, March 9--The house has passed H. R. 20048, declaring that all citizens of Porto Rico and certain natives permanently residing in said island shall be citizens of the United States. The effect of the bill is that all citizens of Porto Rico, as defined by section 7 of the act of April 12, 1900, and all natives of Porto Rico who were temporarily absent from that island on April 11, 1899, and have since returned and are permanently residing in that island, and are not citizens of any foreign country, are declared and shall be deemed and held to be citizens of the United States, providing that within six months after the taking effect of this act those qualified for citizenship do not declare their intentions before the district court of the district to not become citizens.

CONVICT LABOR BILL PASSES HOUSE

Washington, March 9--The Bocher convict labor bill has passed the house, the text of the bill being as follows: "That all goods, wares, and merchandise manufactured, produced or mined wholly or in part by convict labor, or in any prison or reformatory, transported into any state or territory or remaining therein for use, consumption, sale or storage, shall upon arrival and delivery in such state or territory be subject to the operation and effect of the laws of such state or territory to the same extent and in the same manner as though such goods, wares and merchandise had been manufactured, produced or mined in such state or territory and shall not be exempt therefrom by reason of being introduced in original packages or otherwise." This bill is the one that was actively championed by the American Federation of Labor.

RAILROAD WRECKS

Washington, March 9--Five passengers and two trainmen were seriously injured on the Southern railway near Milledgeville, Ala., recently, in a wreck, the cause of which has not yet been ascertained. Fourteen passengers were injured on the Illinois traction system at Benld, Ill., when three cars were derailed. Three persons were killed and nineteen injured on the Southern railway at Oxford, Ala., the wreck being caused by the train splitting a switch and then side-swiping a switch engine on a siding. Four men were killed at Muncey, Pa., when the boiler of a locomotive attached to a freight train blew up.

PRINTING BILL REPORTED TO SENATE

Washington, March 9--The Smoot printing bill, over which there has been a heated controversy in reference to the displacement of hand presses for power presses, has been reported to the senate, with the power press provision eliminated, agreeable to a compromise which has been reached. It is stated, however, that the sundry civil bill will carry a provision whereby the power presses will be gradually installed in the Bureau of Engraving, in conformance with the compromise reached.